

FITNESS

Walking - A Step In the Right Direction

Walking is one of the easiest ways to exercise. You can do it almost anywhere and at any time. Walking is also inexpensive. All you need is a pair of comfortable shoes.

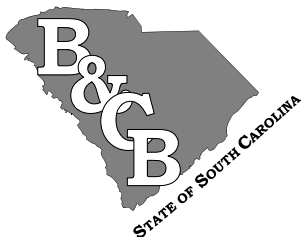
How Do I Start a Walking Program?

It is important to design a program that will work for you. In planning your walking program, keep the following points in mind:

1. Choose a safe place to walk. Find a partner or group of people to walk with you. Your walking partner(s) should be able to walk with you on the same schedule and at the same speed.
2. Wear shoes with thick, flexible soles that will cushion your feet and absorb shock.
3. Wear clothes that are right for the season. Cotton clothes for the summer help keep you cool by absorbing sweat and allowing it to evaporate. Layer your clothing in the winter, and as you warm up, you can take off some layers.
4. Stretch before you walk.
5. Think of your walk in three parts. Walk slowly for five minutes. Increase your speed for the next five minutes. Finally, to cool down, walk slowly again for five minutes.
6. Try to walk at least three times per week. Add two to three minutes per week to the fast walk. If you walk less than three times per week, increase the fast walk more slowly.
7. To avoid stiff or sore muscles or joints, start gradually. Over several weeks, begin walking faster, going further and walking for longer periods of time.
8. Always monitor your walking progress and listen to what your body is telling you!

Remember the more you walk, the better you will feel and the more calories you use.

Please check with your doctor before starting a walking program or another form of exercise.



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